



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Orange County Polluter Sentenced to 16 Months in State Prison

Westminster – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) announced today that an Orange County Superior Court sentenced Steven Craig Booth, of Anaheim, to 16 months in state prison for criminal violations relating to his operation of a metalizing business in Stanton. Booth pled guilty to eight felony and six misdemeanor charges, including hazardous waste, drug possession, and illegal weapons violations.

"I am pleased to see the court take a tough stand against polluters like Mr. Booth. This penalty sends a clear message that crimes against the environment and the health of Californians will not be tolerated," said Leonard Robinson, Acting Director for DTSC. "Protecting California's environment through tough enforcement of existing laws is a key component of the Governor's Environmental Action Plan," he added.

A multi-agency investigation revealed that Booth had directed operations in which zinc hazardous waste was unlawfully dumped in the trash and was, as unlawfully stored on site. In addition, Booth violated district air permits and regulations by spraying zinc metal, and by fabricating documents to conceal his crimes. Subsequently, zinc hazardous waste was emitted from his shop into the air, ground and county flood canal, located behind the building. Investigators estimate these illegal practices had occurred for 10-15 years.

According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, zinc is a common, naturally-occurring element found in air, soil, water and food. Low levels of zinc are essential for maintaining good health; however, exposure to high levels can be harmful. Zinc is commonly used in manufacturing as a coating to prevent rust. It is also used in dry cell batteries, and is mixed with other metals to make alloys like brass and bronze. Booth's metalizing business used zinc to coat wrought-iron fences to keep them from rusting.

Booth pled guilty to the following felony and misdemeanor violations:

- Three felony counts of illegal disposal of hazardous waste
- One felony count of Illegal storage of hazardous waste
- One felony count of possession of a controlled substance
- One felony count of possession of a controlled substance for transportation

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- One felony count of possession of a controlled substance for sale
- One felony count of carrying an exotic weapon
- Two misdemeanor counts of releasing an air contaminant in violation of the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) rules and regulations
- One misdemeanor count of falsifying documents required to be kept by SCAQMD
- One misdemeanor count of not carrying workers compensation insurance
- One misdemeanor count of possessing marijuana
- One misdemeanor count of false imprisonment

The investigation was a collaborative effort with DTSC's Criminal Investigations Branch, the Orange County District Attorney's Office, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), and the Orange County Health Care Agency's Hazardous Materials Management Section.

DTSC regulates the generation, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste within the State of California. DTSC ensures compliance with the Hazardous Waste Control Law through regulations, inspections, and criminal investigations.

For more information, visit DTSC's web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov. For complaints involving the illegal dumping, storage, or transportation of hazardous waste, call 1-800-69-TOXIC.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.